

THREADS FROM THE  
ORIENTAL LOOM

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A TURKISH LADY

Gurdji, V

# THREADS FROM THE ORIENTAL LOOM

A SERIES OF INTIMATE NOTES AND SKETCHES  
HELPFUL AND INTERESTING TO STUDENTS  
CONNOISSEURS AND COLLECTORS



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“Dreamy when Dawn’s Left Hand was in the Sky  
I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,  
‘Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup.’ ”  
“And look—a thousand blossoms with the Day  
Woke.”

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

## DEDICATION

The purpose of this little book is two-fold; to place the interpretation of the Oriental loom's rich and enchanting weaves, so close at touch of lover's of the Eastern peoples' Art of Arts, that they may readily and pleasantly sense the depth, beauty and richness of sentiment animating tone, form, design, material and workmanship; all the way through—from foundation warp and loom-mechanism to finished, regal texture, these weaves are sentient things, created with the tenderest, proudest and most heroic sentiments, so they are monumental as ever psalm and saga were.

My second motive in offering this little book is to so clearly point out the distinguishing qualities and characteristics of each class of these Oriental weaves as will enable the purchaser or student to immediately recognize the parentage of them all; even that of some superb and extremely satisfying weaves of newer date (though of no less ancient

inspiration), and to give the confidence of knowledge regarding certain other of the weavings bearing names not yet familiar outside commerce—whose rapidly growing exigencies have demanded increase of titles.

The call for these sumptuous weaves of the East is so world-wide that to know them in spirit, as well as in workmanship and material, is part of modern education, and more and more so as their exquisitely harmonizing power in accentuating the richness and allurement of other rare and beautiful furnishings, constitute their demand from architects, decorators and other assemblers of modern luxurious homes—ever greater and more insistent.

We of the Orient feel even more grateful for this awakening desire to know the spirit of our royal Art, than we do for oft-repeated inquiries as to seemingly fabulous values placed upon some of its rich and ancient examples; in the manifestation of this spirit we

are able to trace an inspiring splendid growth of living interest, and so, to explain the more material facts as to immediately deepen their interest.

May these intimate little sketches and suggestions, herein given, perfectly fulfil the trust for which they are placed in print.

JOHN B. DONCHIAN.

“Like a chameleon, the heavens spread for thee,  
    the Carpet of the Spring.”

“Know’st thou what word the Bulbul  
Sang this morning in the Grove?

‘What man art thou, that being man  
Hath in the heart no love?’ ”

*Sir Edwin Arnold’s Translation From the  
Gulistan (Persian Rose Garden) of  
Shaikh Sa’di.*



STREET SCENE IN CAIRO



## INTRODUCTION

Every creation of the ancient Oriental loom is as rich of symbol and exquisite of measure as the Rubaiyats of Saadi, Hafiz or Omar are; and each of them is as intimately tempered by the character and entourage of that part of the East wherein it originated, as were the songs of these great poets.

The Art-lover absorbs their enchantment in ever-increasing measure as he gazes (much as a devotee of painting gazes into ancient canvases imbued with the soul of their master creators) into their rich pile and splendid needlework.

The wonderful atmospheric effect of ancient examples of the Eastern loom, is one of their fascinations; it is an intense and virile atmosphere, unfound in any other Art expression—even that of its sister, Tapestry—and it is more heroic than that of the brush, because it is not a result of blend in blend on the master's palette. It is an Oriental law that coloring—being religiously emblematic—must be absolutely pure; individualiz-

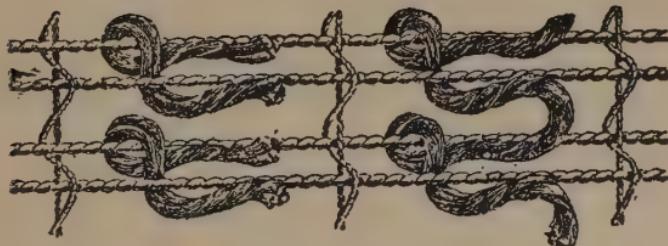
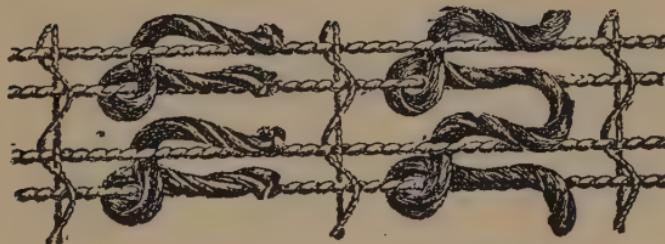
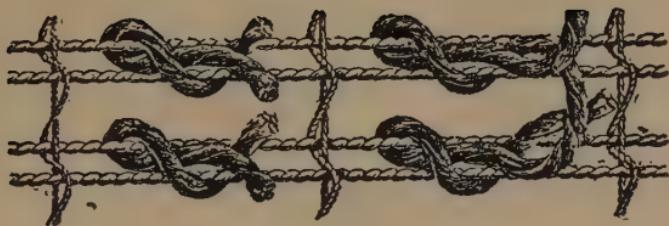
ingly sincere; clear, true, candid even to the degree of its challenging side-by-side courage. The coloring of Oriental loom creations, is one of their most alluring attributes, deep, and sparkling with life itself. No tones of less pure and noble parentage than Natures choicest own, were permitted to enter into the bodies and fibres of the royal wools and silks with which the masters gave substance to commanded symbol; for it must be understood that—in ancient days—each weaving was an offering to exultant or exalted attainment and character, or to reverent and tender sentiment. The materials to be used in these precious weavings were zealously protected from all possible rough or impure contact; the master-weavers were men so eloquent in the exquisite service to which they were appointed, that, provided the finished work were pronounced “worthy,” the passing of years in its accomplishment, was as nothing.

Is it not then, a right divine that upon such Art expression, be placed value far above price of the gems and gold—which, it is true, on certain occasions permitted inter-weavings?

Under erudite and valiant search from Oriental parallel to Oriental parallel, and from Oriental sea to Oriental mountain, the available number of antique gems of the loom is growing constantly less—much of the difficulty of their present discovery lying not only in the remoteness of the villages or hamlets where they are sometimes found (as gems of color and line are often found), but in the greater reluctance of native possessors to yield them, even to expert dealers who have well proved their right to the important trust.

Matter for our instant and sincere congratulations obtains, therefore, in the fact that a splendid Renaissance of the Art is now in progress in certain parts of the Orient, where dwell not a few descendants of master-weavers who

were peculiarly opulent in some of the loom's most commanding secrets: stirred by traditions of such ancestral prestige; hereditarily deft of hand; as fervently color-sensing and symbol-reverencing as the masters were—triumphs of weave, quality, tone and device are now eventuating among these modern workers that hark back to the olden days. A few of these new triumphs are briefly described in the division of this little book which treats of "Characterization and Qualities."



SOME OF THE KNOTS USED IN WEAVING  
ORIENTAL RUGS



## BRIEFLY HISTORIC

The first weaving upon which man's eye rested was, doubtless, the wind's interlacement of the tall and pliant reed-like plants of the East, and the result of the under-ground action of Nature upon roots of shrubs and trees, gradually brought to the surface. Just when these Nature-suggestions first quickened human intelligence into activity there is, as yet, no known record; but the wonderful archaeologic discoveries now being made in the warm breast of Eastern lands that wave-like, enfold cities and countries opulent centuries before our own most remotely known ancestors came upon the arena of action, prove that weaving was one of the earliest of human occupations, and that experience and the development of man's finer perceptions speedily rendered it one of the richest. We are learning many such lessons from the uncovering of Babylon, teeming with luxury as she was almost ten and a half centuries before the Christian Era.

Cleopatra knew well the enhancement of such luxurious background to her captivating charms. Homer and Virgil wrote in Iliad and Odyssey of the magnificence these weavings lent to the opulent palaces of Greece and Rome. Cyrus eagerly commanded them. Alexander the Great, held captive master-weavers and dyers, as among his richest spoils of war. Pharaoh revelled in their virile beauty, and Ezekiel, the stately prophet, made frequent mention of them.

The loom of those far-off times was precisely the same as that in use in the Orient to-day; it was so purely an inspiration, that neither passing ages nor human ingenuity, have been able to improve it.

Sovereigns visiting one another, esteemed the loan of a company of dyers and weavers expert in certain colorings and devices (for their re-creation with characteristic adaptations, in their own lands) as the greatest possible evidence of mutual friendship; to-day these

weaves are both the joy and the argument of Oriental and other Art texture experts.

The proud and lofty, yet luxury-sensing natures of Eastern peoples primarily nomadic, peculiarly loved and desired such textiles; and so, under dazzling skies, with passion uplifted and intensified in the fragrance of Eastern gardens, stirred by the nightingale's cello-like tones, to the soft ripple of streams clear as "the Rivers of Crystal" must be, with magnificent sweep of sea and land glimpsed under spicy shade of pines and cedars, and cypresses pointing like fingers to the firmament,—animated in every sense by wealth of Nature's gifts to such creation, the people of the Orient grew to exquisitely and gratefully fill the dreamy passing of their days with practice in it until the Garden of the East became also the Garden of the Orient's Art-magnificence. Egypt and Palestine gave of themselves to it. Babylonia, Damascus and Tyre were among its foster-moth-

ers. Bagdad was one of the chief gateways of its issuance to and from Persia, India, Turkey, to the Celestial-Kingdom and to Zipanzu; and each sovereignty introduced left trace of itself into tone, weave and motif.

The Far East was one of the earliest sections of the world to give itself up to the captivating industry, by means of which it felt lay supreme power for the utterance of most enduring expression of religious sentiment and honor; privilege to create gifts worthy offering Divinity, Sovereign, grace or prowess.

In the care of the splendid sheep, goats and other long-haired animals whose coats and wool were substance for these weavings,—mountain shepherds, who were unchallenged kings of long heredity in their honorable calling, undertook the enhancement to the fullest possible degree, of the brilliancy, softness and durability Oriental climate and sustenance had imparted to the fleeces and coats of the animals they watched.

So, from generation to generation, from father to son and son again, new triumphs in workmanship and color were veneratingly proclaimed;—worshipful, valiant and tender symbolism took new form;—and then the poets came, and their songs imparted new grace and soul to the sensitive Art.

## Chant of the Ancient Rug Weavers.

---

“In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate,  
Great Lord of Life and Wisdom  
Which to transcend—no flight of thought may  
claim,  
The Lord of honor and of place and pride,  
Who gives our daily bread and is our guide.”

*(From Roger's Translation of  
Fardusi's “Shah-Namah.”)*



ZEIBEKS IN ASIA MINOR



## AN IDYLIC PROCESS

Before an Oriental rug's first soft line of woof may be battened into place, the weavers reverently address themselves in chant to Allah, imploring His benediction upon their work and ascribing and dedicating all that may be most beautiful in it to Him. Nothing "happens" nor comes by accident into either substance or design of an Oriental rug. Every tendril and petal, each most delicate scroll and leaf, has its own especial mission in symbol and design; even the quaint irregularities appearing in some weaves are not accidental; quite the contrary, for they are made to show that "not anything is perfect save Allah alone."

Once a design-key is given and the leading motif explained, the reading of an Oriental rug is as fascinating as ever song or romance were. Interweavings in the quaintly graceful characters of Eastern text (sometimes forming entire borders or introduced in body cartouches) much enhance the

value and interest of the pieces bearing them. Sometimes it is an extract from the Koran; again it is the poetic recital of a chivalrous deed; occasionally it is a sentiment of tender, ardent or reverent birth. The master-weaver's name may generally be discovered with all of these, and in some pieces of extraordinary beauty, it appears alone.

The large size of a weaving to be made, often compels that the loom be set in plain air rather than subjected to the confinement of the usual Oriental weaver's domicile. The smaller pieces are, as a rule, the work of a single weaver; so also are some magnificently individual larger ones; the productions of the larger pieces, however, usually calls together whole families or entire small neighborhoods. The nearness of beam to beam is governed by the size of the weaving to be made. The worker commands the loom from a slightly elevated position before it. The weaving is done from left to right, and each few consecutive strands of warp are pushed

into place so as the better to maintain the picture in the weaver's mind. Into precious antique weavings, only the finest fleeces of mountain sheep, blooded for generations,—the silky hair of especial breeds of goats and camels,—and the thread of skilfully tended and nurtured silkworms were permitted to enter. The carders—deft in their work for centuries—watch the soft, pure material rise and fall with as great solicitude as ever Vestal novice watched the snowy fleece her sister novice was to weave into Vestal robes. Skilful as the carders and as light of touch as they, are the women whose care is the passing and re-passing from distaff to spindle and reel, of the lustrous threads. No rough nor ungentle touch may ever fall upon these materials; even when they are lifted from the receptacles wherein they have taken on their glorious tone, the skeins are carefully laid down for the sun to dry.

But the high priest of the loom, he who is honored beyond all others in its

work, is the dyer. For his purpose the essence of life—drawn from hearts of Eastern flowers and foliage—is placed with water of exceeding clarity and rich in the brilliant mineral qualities of the Orient's splendid gems. The stone or earthen jars containing these elements are carried to that part of the house-top where the sun pours longest and most ardently. For days of hours the dyer waits the first stages of his Art, and then, ascending to the roof, he takes his place beside the jars and becomes lost in watching for precisely that moment when the marvelous liquid takes on life. The scale of red means longevity, vitality; white is purity, innocence; green is immortality, power, divinity; and gold is nobility, prestige, rank.

Far above price are the traditions of the dyer held. If, in the passing of time, the secret of some ravishing tone has grown faint and vague,—if, for a while, it has been seemingly lost, this tone is ever before the master, and sometimes

he descends from his watch on the house-top with exaltation on his face and kingly measure in his step; in these divine moments the power to restore the hidden color-note has rewarded his consuming toil, and he has won the privilege to peculiarly help sustain the glory of his country's Art!

The shape and size of Oriental rugs were ordered mainly by the requirements of Eastern architecture. The usual scale of size variation in larger Persian silk rugs or carpets, is from ten to twenty feet in length by five to eight feet in width. These rugs—brilliant as transplanted garden could be—are placed down the center of audience hall, salon or chief apartment, which is further furnished with a raised dais at the top for sovereign or host, and deep divans facing each other equi-distantly down the side; the divans are covered with woven strips of the finest qualities and richest texture; “palace runners” is their name in the East; we of the West more frequently desig-

nate them "hall strips"; these vary in size, according to the length and depth of the divan they are made to cover; several square or a pair of oblong pillows, covered with the same rich material, and placed at the back of the divans, increase their luxury. One can hardly imagine more sybaritish refinement than that of a room so fashioned and furnished; to the eye it glows with appealing notes, while the soul is bathed in peace or quickened in depth by poetic or valorous metaphor; and there is soft luxury of tread on substance bathed for centuries walking in incense.

One of the most opulent Oriental rugs now in existence, is that which lies spread before the famous Peacock Throne. Very few people are now left in perplexity as to the velvety pile and superb tone very ancient Oriental rugs display; the olden custom of putting off the shoes or of exchanging heavier outdoor foot-coverings for soft sandals when entering temple, palace or richly appointed domicile, is well known; it is

under these softer treads continued for a long time, that the subtle wealth of color and material has mellowed and deepened until nothing else of the sort in the whole world is able to outrival them.

“Our highest ideals doth He excel,  
Painter supreme of every gem as well!”  
“Like Gardens in the spring,  
Of color full, of scent, of beauty rare!”  
“A lofty, fruitful tree  
That will produce fresh rubies ev’ry day,  
For wisdom in its breast to bear away.”

—FARDUSI.

Fardusi: (Abul Kávím-i-Mansúr) born in Khorassan about A. D. 923—author of Persia’s greatest epic poem. His father was the Shah’s gardener, and his name—Fardusi—is from the Persian word for Paradise.



A CAFE IN DAMASCUS



A FEW INSCRIPTIONS INTERWOVEN IN  
PERSIAN RUGS

---

چه خوشی گفت بلبل بلک در حسن  
که خوشی امری که خوشی روز حوت  
که ب نمار واقع و منظره چشم من استانه  
فرودانی خانه خانه قوایت تو است

PRONUNCIATION :

Chi hosh goft bulbul beghol derehman.  
Ke hosh amméde ke hosh rooz madanet.  
Karem nooma ravat vè manzare cheshmumen  
astané.  
Féroudane Khané to est too est.

TRANSLATION :

How cheerfully and confusedly the nightingale  
sang to the rose, I welcome thee, this bright  
morn. Be merciful and gaze down from  
(your) balcony to delight my anxious eyes, for  
thou alone art my comfort and place of refuge.

# وَهَكَهُ اذْوَجُودُهُ تَسْيِمْ چَهُ خُونْتُوَانْتَ

PRONUNCIATION :

Vakh-ke az vajoode taneem chee khoon né  
toovanet.

TRANSLATION :

Oh ! after this existence to what sufferings may  
my soul fall heir.

جهان جام و فلکه بی ساقی اجل  
خدر یق باده نوشی مجلس و  
ضل احی نیست احمد هیکسرا  
ازان جام ازان بی ساقی ازان

PRONUNCIATION :

Jihani jaam ve félèk may-you saki-i édjèl,  
Khelayik badé noush majlisé,  
Khelas nay-yot asla hitch Kesstra.  
Azani jaam azani may-you saki-i azan.

TRANSLATION :

The world is a cup and destiny the deadly wine  
of the cupbearer. Men drank it in company.  
None were ever free from this cup, from this  
wine of the cupbearer.

“My Cave-Mate.”

“And thou shalt see every Nation KNEELING.”

—EL. KORAN.

اَبْهَرَ رَابِّ بَارَكَ بَادَهَ

ساتی بیور باده بر افزوز جام مه بطری بکو که کار جنگ شر بکار مه  
ماد پیاده عیسی خیوار دیده ام ای بچن زلزه شرب ابرام مه  
چندان بود کر شمود ناز پی قدان خاک عجلوه کرد حضور جنت ام مه

PRONUNCIATION :

“A jahan ra mooharek ba-ad.”

Sake banore ba-adé, ber afzooze jaame maa, batarbe bagho ke kearre, jehan shud béghiaime maa;

Maa der payialayi essa;

Roohoo yar deda am, ay bécheze zeel-la:it, sharbe abadam maa; Chandan bood gharishmé vé, naze pay-you ghadda an, ghiakhe gha-jalvé serroo, soonoo-roo jézame maa.

TRANSLATION :

“May you be fortunate in this world.”

O! cupbearer, fill my burning cup with sparkling wine, speak to me in mirth, for I do not care for all the deeds of this world. I have seen the rosy cheek of my love in the cup of the Prophet.

Ah! for this brief joy I still cling to my goblet; many have bowed before that stately houri, I likewise bow with respect and obeisance.

طارکانه درختانه کش ایند فرشی نو قلمون

PRONUNCIATION :

Ba dat-sayeyi datakh-tanish keustar i-yend  
farshe bookalamoon.

TRANSLATION :

Beneath the shadow of a tree spreads chamele-onlike delightful parterre.

جلوک کن بایین املي منعوت وی پکشتنی قاییم نکر

PRONUNCIATION :

Jilvē kēm khun bayyin ehle sanat herr dedē be  
kusha nakshe kalechēi noeukēr.

TRANSLATION :

However small and insignificant the design  
of a rug may be, it nevertheless calls forth the  
attention of a most humble artist.

“The sky hath no pearl that is rare like to thee.”  
“Sweet are the scented breezes, heart-soothing,

soft and low,

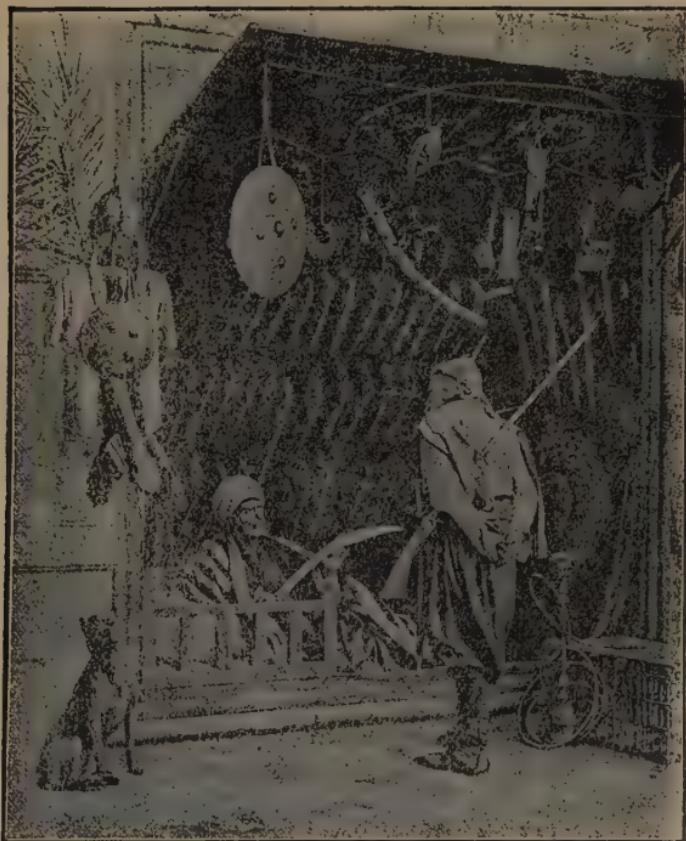
That, for thy love awaking  
At early morning blow.”

“The lion-hearted

Whom no mischance affeareth.”

“At whoso’s table sat I, God purveyor of the  
feast was!”

*From the Poems of Mohammad Hafiz of  
Shiras—Payne’s Translation.*



ARMS AND ARMOR SHOP



## CHARACTERIZATION AND QUALITIES

Though each individual Oriental rug, carpet, or hanging is primarily classed under the name of the province, district or tribe whence it came, rapidly increasing commercial exigencies have demanded the addition of new names or of names slightly changed from the more familiar ones; but each such name is, however, easily traced back to the group to which it belongs.

### GROUP I. PERSIAN OR IRANIAN

Persian or Iranian rugs form the first and largest of the six original groups; very few antiques of this group can now be found for commercial purposes. Persian rugs are not—as many people have inferred—universally silk rugs; on the contrary some of the finest Persian examples are of wool. Persian rugs are very close in weave, rich in pile and poetic in design; depth of ven-

eration, pride in honorable attainments, and wealth of tenderness commanded weaver and designer. Characteristic motifs in Persian rugs are symbolic trees—the palm leaf (wrongly so-called, because this graceful design did not originate in the leaf of the palm, but in the loop of a beautiful river upon which the devout looked when rising from prayer, in a great mosque to which they journeyed for the purpose); flowers—especially the lotus, the Persian rose, and the lily in its different families—vines and foliage; the nightingale and its feathered kin; scroll-like or intertwining serpentine devices; animals; royal hunts, and forestry with charming sky, land and water effects; assemblies of great personages, and religious or historic legendary. It is no disparagement to the Persian rug familiar to us to-day, that nearly all its examples are of modern, or only a little removed from modern, make; for material, texture and design are true to the old traditions, while nothing can outrival the superb colors that vivify each other, and blend



RARE ANTIQUE ISPAHAN RUG, REPRESENTING  
A ROYAL PAGEANT



into pearl-like tones, or the rose and ivory that heighten the loveliness each of the other. The most precious examples of Persian silk rugs are now found in Eastern mosques and mausoleums.

## KASHAN

Kashan, lying between Ispahan and Kerman, is one of the smallest Provinces of Persia, but it is thickly settled with industrious and art-sensing people. History says that the building of Kashan (the capital city of the same name) was one of the many great achievements of the Princess Zobediah, wife of Haroun-al-Raschid, in the ninth century of the Christian Era. Just outside Kashan is the Garden of Pin, one of the loveliest of Persian Gulistans. Perhaps the exquisite beauty of this favorite resort has stirred into new vitality the art inheritance of its people—for no modern rugs outrival these of Kashan in velvet-like quality, splendor of weave, richness of coloring and attractiveness of design—usually flowers or garden

scenes with birds, personages and animals; the leading tones are soft rose, ruby, ivory, gold, blue and brown, all most exquisitely blended. No richer floor covering can be found; the demand for Kashans is so great that it is often difficult to obtain them. In size they vary from the usual rug scale up to carpets of eighteen by fourteen feet.

### KHORASSAN

Khorassan ("Eastwards") weaves come from the largest Province of Persia; it borders Afghanistan, and its soil is permeated with strong saline elements; a large area is covered with glittering sand. It is Khorassan that yields the most beautiful turquoises in the world, and other entrancingly toned gems are native there. Only the north is fertile. This is the Eastern Paradise of whose gardens Omar wrote so ravishingly and where he imaged the "Crystal Cup filled with divine wine." Meshed, the capital of Khorassan, was Omar's birthplace. The ground of Khorassan Rugs and Carpets is usually some rich



ANTIQUE KERMAN RUG



solid tone with medallion (or rosette) center and palm-leaf effects at each corner. Khorassan Rugs are enriched with several fine borders. The dominant colors are impressive tones of red, soft old rose, turquoise, and green as deep and sparkling as the aqua-marine; every year's intelligent use of a Khorassan weaving enhances its loveliness and value.

### KERMAN

Kerman, another eastern province of Persia (situated south of Khorassan), is also close on the confines of a great salt plain. Its chief town, Kerman, lies high up in the mountains embosomed by the province. Kerman weavings appear in medium and the larger sizes, and in fineness and quality are among the greatest marvels of Eastern loom production; they are much sought by connoisseurs. The leading Kerman motif is a rich variation of the Khorassan—a beautiful central medallion surrounded by flowers and foliage in

and under which birds rest and animals spring. Kerman rugs are very durable and their pile is soft and elastic.

### SAROUK

From a small village in the Ispahan province are coming rugs, so beautiful that they may well be termed (as they are) "Children of the old Ispahans" that were the delight of the aristocratic world. Their weave is very close and fine; their pile is not so heavy—but is more regal than that of any other Persian weave save Kashan; the rich concord of their color is one of their alluring qualities; their floral designs are characterized with cypress tree or palm-leaf motifs. Sometimes they are geometric. From rug scales up to large carpets in size, they admirably respond to to-day's requirements.

### KERMANSHAH

Contrary to general belief, Kermanshah rugs and carpets are not woven in their name-city; but are assembled from all parts of the fertile, well-water-



ANTIQUE SINNEH RUG, REPRESENTING  
A ROYAL CONFERENCE



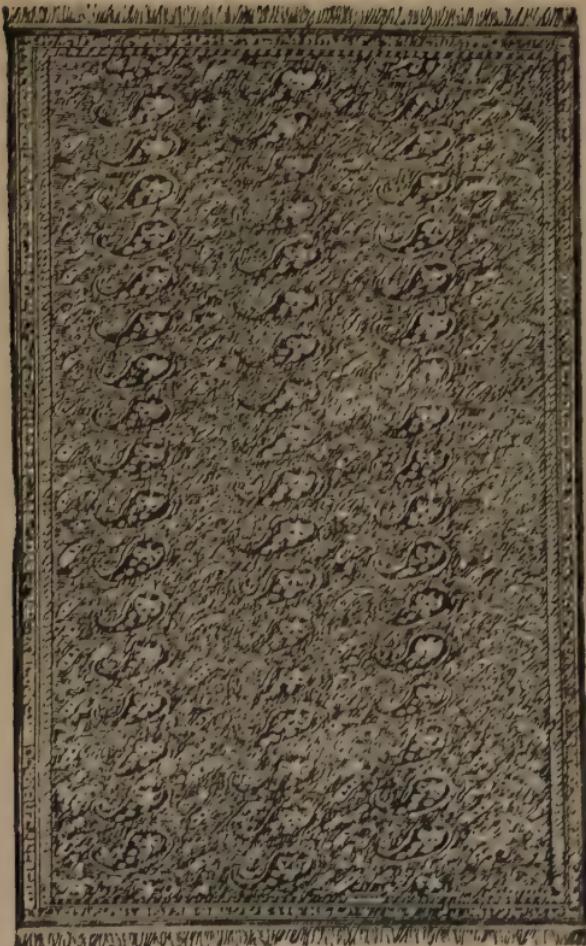
ed territory lying between Hamadan and Luristan, where nomadic tribes gather for the long season. The shepherds tend their flocks and the weavers pursue their art in ideal pastoral surroundings. Each of these nomadic tribes holds as an almost sacred possession, at least one example of the superb ancient Kermanshahs that were made under royal patronage and that were everywhere famous for the beautiful intricacies of their floral design. There is usually a central medallion and the borders are always very rich. Some Kermanshahs are produced in all-over palm-leaf designs; two cypress trees at either side of a vase form another popular device. Kermanshah colors are daintily harmonious; their notes are blue, green, gold, brown, ivory and rose on light background. The warp is strong cotton; the pile is not thick but pliant. For their many admirable qualities, Kermanshahs are extremely desirable.

## SINNEH

The beautiful gardens that surround Sanna—a province of Far Persia (Irak-Adjemi give alluring tone to the close-woven, light-texture Sinnehs that take their name thence. Dark, rich reds and blues with ivory and yellow, are the individualizing colors. The several borders that surround them are of exceptional beauty; diamond-shaped medallions and gracefully arranged small figures are familiar motifs, and the ends are finished in elaborate fringes. Square Sinnehs—solid in tone with effective corner design and small opening at one side, have long been in use as saddle-covers for high dignitaries.

## SINNEH-KILIM

Sinneh-Kilim, especially appropriate for couch or table covering—is one of the most charming Kilims made; both sides are needle-wrought and there is no nap. Perhaps in no other Eastern covering or fabric, is more of romance enwrought,—for tenderness, love, and ambition guide every stitch made by the



ROYAL ANTIQUE SINNEH RUG



slender fingers of the young maiden's working under the watchful eyes of their future lords and masters, sitting near, that they may witness their intended bride's proficiency. The usual size-scale of Sinneh-Kilims is six to seven, by three and a half to four feet.

### FERAGHAN

Feraghan superby antique rugs are still found in the province of this name; their background is characteristically ivory in tone with medallion center and rich bleu de Sevres corner panels; these antiques are very close in weave and their warp is often of linen; all antique Feraghans are oblong in shape; they vary in size from five feet by three, to twenty-two by eight. The borders show exquisite blends of green, red (or rose) and yellow (or gold); another characteristic device is all-over sprinkling of half-moons, rosettes and geometric figures on deep blue background.

## SHIRAZ

Shiraz, capital of the province of Farsistan with its beautiful gardens where Persian princes loved to while away the hours,—its wines and its roses, was the inspiring source of many Persian Rubaiyats. Prior to the ruin-creating earthquake of 1853—this epicurean place was noted as Persia's Art mart for marvelous glass mosaics, inlays of wood and metal, dazzlingly-rich embroideries, enamel-inlaid cups of gold and silver, painted and ivory-inset boxes or coffers, velvets heavy with precious threads, antique gems made more valuable with engraved sentiments from Hafiz, Cashee plaques of great antiquity, quaint and beautifully-illuminated manuscripts, wealth of rubies, pearls and diamonds, and royal-textured rugs symbolizing in exquisite measure the Orient's highest degree of poetic and flowery imagery. Both Saadi and Hafiz lived in Shiraz. The weavings of this place are of the softest texture and the most brilliant lustre of the entire Iran-



ANTIQUE SINNEH RUG



ium group. Their fancy selvage is an easily-distinguishing characteristic. The motifs are usually palm-leaf or geometric; sometimes they are vari-sized stripes in rich dark blues and reds. A square Shiraz—though not impossible to find—is extremely rare; they are seldom larger than fifteen feet by seven.

## SEREBENDS

Serebends are quite like Feraghans in shape, and are always found in all-over palm-leaf design (sometimes larger, sometimes smaller.) Their colors are red on dark blue or dark blue on red. We have already referred to the erroneous use of the term "palm-leaf" and the derivation of the pattern from a river in sacred precincts; this river—the Guevrish Chai (Copper River) is a beautiful stream in that part of the enchanting Vale of Cashmere which is crossed in reaching the great mosque built in the mountains of Tahkt-i-Sulemain; the Cashmere shawls and rich Serebends bearing this device, gain much in interest

from the true explanation of the motif, which is usually intermingled with flowers like those by which the river itself is bordered.

### HAMADAN

Hamadan, at the northwest base of Mt. Elvend, a hundred and sixty miles or so southwesterly by westerly from Teheran lies Hamadan, capital of Irak-Adjemi. It is a large and busy city and a traffic outpost of great importance with Bagdad, London, Ispahan and other commercial ports of entry. The chief material of Hamadan rugs is camel's hair; very few antique Hamadans are now found. Their size scale is generous in variety and their characteristic device is a medallion or rosette on solid red, ivory, blue or terra-cotta background.

### GOROVANS

Gorovans are exceedingly popular because of their great adaptability to hard and constant use. They size from six by four to twenty-six by eighteen feet; usually the strong, bold conven-



SILK RUG WITH SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS



tionalized floral or geometric designs are in effective tones of dark blue, deep red, and gold, and are enclosed in three beautiful floral or scroll-like borders, on ecru or ivory ground. Some Gorovans have an extra border inscribed with Persian text.

### SERAPI

Serapi rugs are named from the little village of Sareb where most of the finest of them are woven. They are a variety of Gorovan weave though of much finer texture than the Gorovans themselves. These rugs are very desirable for living rooms; in size they range from the larger rugs to carpets. Their predominating tones are vivid reds, browns, blues, old gold and ivory; bold floral or geometric designs frequently cover the entire field; a favorite device is a large floriated medallion with similar corner panels and a series of three effective borders.

## HYBALIKS OR SADDLE-BAGS

Hybaliks or Saddle-Bags, mainly of Persian weave, also come from other Asiatic lands. They are made in pairs, for convenience in throwing over the camel's back when traveling, for they are the Oriental voyageur's recognized suitcase, valise and trunk; sometimes they also fulfill the office of a baby carriage. Their usefulness and beauty for cushion-covers, magazine-holders and ottomans, has long been established.

## MODERN PERSIAN RUGS

Persia supplies the great importing houses of this and other countries with many weavings ordered from special designs; it is, therefore, practically impossible to particularize as to their individuality—for this is limitless. We may, however, say that in durability, not even the best made antiques can surpass many of these modern weavings. As a rule, the weave is not so close as in antique examples; the colors are pronounced; the pile is luxuriously heavy.



ANTIQUE KERMAN RUG, REPRESENTING TREE OF LIFE AND  
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN EVIL AND GOOD



## THE PERSIAN LION

The Persian Lion was added to Persia's royal coat-of-arms about eight hundred years ago, to perpetuate the memory of Ali—grandson of Mohammeed—surnamed the "Lion of God." The Woman's face in the Sun appeared some years later by edict of a powerful Shah who desired to honor his favorite wife. The Two-edged Sword is a symbol of power. In the Persian Flag, these symbols are shown in yellow on green background.

Among the best known Persian rugs in a partial commercial list of modern date, are the following:

Ardabad, Savolan, Lule, Bijar-Shedda, Tabriz, Gulistan, Sarack, Sabrouck-Boulak, Boulah, Joshghan and Kurdistan.

## GROUP II.

### TURKISH OR ANATOLIAN

Art collectors and connoisseurs search as eagerly for examples of ancient Turk-

ish or Anatolian weavings as does the diver of Ceylon for the pearl-island's largest and most lustrous gems. Naturally, the prices of the rugs are commensurate with the difficulty in obtaining them.

## TURKISH SILK RUGS

Turkish Silk rugs of modern make may, for various reasons, be first considered here. In color they are bold and deep; their design is usually a duplicate of or an inspiration from some fine old Persian or antique Turkish production; they are chiefly woven in Caesaria (or Kayserieh) in Asia Minor, by Greek or Armenian girls. In the rug fabrique instituted by the Sultan at Hereke, some two hundred Mohammedan girls have been engaged for several years in studying the art and in creating Turkish silk rugs of remarkable color-depth and great grace of design—usually in floral or temple motifs. The success already attained by these young workers, gives the happiest promise for the future, if



ANTIQUE KERMAN RUG, REPRESENTING  
A ROYAL GARDEN



their efforts and interest are patiently and wisely fostered. The weave of these rugs is close, and their texture is very fine. Their usual size is five and a half feet in length by three and a half feet in width.

## GHIORDEZ OR YEORDEZ

Ghiordes or Yerdez rugs are among the most beautiful weavings the Orient has ever produced. In atmospheric effect they are absolutely peerless,—their arches, columns, balconies, vases and flowers standing out clear and distinct as against the Oriental sky; this is especially noticeable if a bit of the sky is introduced. In this effect, a Ghiordes weaving is as enchanting as Corot, with his illusory brush, ever made canvas. An antique Ghiordes is now almost unobtainable; Ghiordes rugs are among the first and truest of Temple rugs. Though none but the rich and powerful might offer an antique Ghiordes at the sacred shrine or tomb,—their production led to that of other prayer rugs that were far

more easily in reach of the mass of the faithful. The average size of antique Ghiordes rugs, is six and a half feet in length by four feet in width. An almost bewildering softness of ensemble marks them; their nap is very short, but velvety. Their general tones are individualizingly intense, yet mellow; rose, blue, green and terra cotta, with a combination of white, and an occasional masterly touch of black or some other sombre tone are their characteristic colorings. About a center of rich, solid tone, springs a "Mihrab," or temple entrance, sentinelled with graceful columns elegantly capitoled, and with jeweled lamp or vase of exquisite flowers suspended from the apex of the ample arch. Ghiordes rugs have one wide and sometimes a great many narrow borders of ivory ground, with rosebud or conventionalized floral design in ravishing shades of chrome, pigeon's blood, soft blue and wonderful green.



ROYAL SILK IRAN RUG



## COULA

Coula rugs are more loosely woven than Ghiordez, which they somewhat resemble, and have a long, soft pile. The central design is either floral on solid ground or of scale-like effect. The bordering is peculiarly impressive, being composed of four or five uniform stripes of ivory tone, broken by small rosettes of green, pale blue and gold. In size they are from medium to about eight by four feet. Their name is taken from the town where they are woven.

## LADIC

Ladic rugs, in absolute contradistinction to the balance of Turkish rugs, very few Ladics are of modern make; nearly all we see to-day are antique. Ladic is a village near Koniah, and now lies in ruins. Ladic weavings are usually small door mats, of oblong form, with an occasional larger piece. Ladic rugs present strong color contrasts—intense red, light blue, deep maroon and soft green dominating. The designs are as

characteristically bold as the colors are. In pile and texture they are much like Coulas.

### MELEZ

Melez is the interesting name-city of the rugs so known. Their nearly square shape is one of their distinctions; a favorite size, is five feet by four. Melez rugs are among the softest and lightest of all Anatolian weaves; their designs vary greatly, but they are most frequently floral, lozenge-shaped or temple-arched. Characteristic colorings, are rich shades of red, blue and yellow, with old ivory deftly introduced.

### KILIM

As before suggested, the fabric bearing the name Kilim, is, in make and texture, much like tapestry. The color and design of Kilims, are almost indescribable, both these qualities being generally left to the fancy of the bride or maiden who is busied with their creation, and of whose dowry they are to

form a considerable part. Some of them—manifesting the sentiments of the blushing young artist's mind and soul—are very beautiful. Kiz-Kilims with Mihrab designs are generally woven by Mohammedan girls, and are used by Orientals as prayer rugs only.

### BERGAMA

Bergama rugs, with their glowing colors, come from a small village on the Copper River (Baker Chai), about fifty miles northeast of Smyrna, in the Province of Aiden. Bergama was once a populous and opulent city, famous for its wealth of mosques, palaces and tombs. Bergama weavings are always appealing in their frankness and depth of tone. A medallion,—usually of the conventionalized border,—is a favorite design on richly harmonious, solid background. The borders of Bergamas, are usually wide, and charmingly present blends of delicate blue, ivory and yellow. Another individualizing quality of Bergamas, is their form—almost square.

## MOSSOUL

Mossoul has passed from tribal conqueror to tribal conqueror for ages, as Mesopotamia's capital. It is close by here—between the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates—that sacred history has placed the Garden of Eden. The Yezidas, who live near Mossoul, send all their rugs to this market, the balance of the weaves bearing this name, being assembled from other neighboring nomads. The climate of Mossoul—arid and hot in summer, and with frequent and heavy winter rains—is an incentive to the migratory spirit of the tribes that make it their business center. Mossoul rugs are very heavy in texture, and after a short period of service they take on an attractive sheen. They are exceptionally adapted to hard wear. Bagdad Mossouls are entirely woven of wool, both warp and woof; they are heavy, and have luxuriously long pile. Their coloring is deep and bold. One of the most attractively characteristic designs in which they are produced, is a central



ANTIQUE KERMAN RUG, HUNTING SCENE



medallion, either geometric or floral; another popular treatment is a sprinkling of small figures on a richly-toned background. The bordering of Mossouls is very pleasing. In size, Mossouls vary from five feet by two feet to seven feet by nine feet. Hall or palace runners of this weave are found in sizes up to eighteen feet by three and a half feet.

### TURKISH CARPETS

All Turkish carpets are modern, and the majority are produced close by Smyrna. As a rule, these carpets are woven from patterns and in designs ordered by European and American trade. They are marked in coloring, and their pile is so heavy that the tread is luxuriously lost in it. They vary in size from ten feet by seven feet to twenty-two feet by seventeen.

### THE TURKISH TUGRAH

The Turkish Tugrah (coat-of-arms) appears so frequently in Turkish textiles and such other art-products as the

country's rich embroideries, its pearl work, and the generality of its other art productions, as well as on Turkish coins, stamps and documents,—that it becomes a matter of much interest. Close observation will discover that the hieroglyphic represents a hand. This hand is that of Murad I. (or Ammurath), who was born in 1319, reigned memorably, and was killed in 1389. When the Dalmatian City of Ragusa (on the Adriatic), decided to erect a church, the customary application was made for the Sultan's sanction; an irade (permit) was, therefore, prepared and submitted to Murad for his signature. Having been, as a youth, an unwilling student, the Sultan was not an adept in the art of the pen, but he was very quick and keen of wit; so, holding the three larger fingers of his hand close together, he stretched the small finger and thumb to their capacity of distance, and then, wetting his palm and fingers, he pressed them firmly on the document, the head scribe (nishan-gi-bashi) writing the names of Murad and his father, the title "Khan," and the

words "Victor ever" within the form. The design of the Tugrah has remained the same, the name-characters only being changed with the changes in sovereignty.

Among several other commercially known names applied to the Anatolian Group are:

Kir-Shehir, Koniah, Ismir, Kissesar, Caraman, Merden, Jurdistan, Hamidie, Gulistan, Osmania, Inenlli, Demirjik, Oushak, Yuruk, Yaprak, Inje, and Nazik.

### GROUP III.

#### CAUCASIAN OR DAGHESTAN

Caucasian or Dagestan rugs come from a high, triangular Cis-Caucasian territory stretching down from the Caucasus Mountains to the Caspian Sea. The province is largely populated and is the preferred home, (if such it may be called), of several nomadic tribes. The Lesbians, finest of all Caucasian tribes, are the chief producers of the group of

rugs which bears the name of their home Province, Daghestan. Antique Daghestans are greatly desired for their epicurean texture and lovely coloring—qualities but seldom characterizing the weaves of nomadic tribes. The prevailing tones are blue, ivory, rose, rich red, and yellow in almost its entire scale. In size, Daghestans vary from the smaller rug dimensions to eight feet by ten.

### GUENJA

Guenja is a popular variety of Daghestan weavings, made in the small town whose name they bear. These rugs are coarsish in weave, and of deep, heavy pile; their designs are mainly geometric. Their leading colors are chrome, dark blue, yellow and intense red. Guenja rugs are interestingly individual. Their leading size is about six feet by three and a half feet.

### KAZAK

Kazak rugs, of strong, bold designs, said to represent the armorial bearings of certain distinguished tribesmen, de-



ANTIQUE ANATOLIAN GHIORDEZ RUG



rive their name from their weavers, the daring "Cossacks" of the mountains. The weavings of these rugs are somewhat loose, but their pile is rich, and they are splendid in color. Their general size is about six feet by four.

### SHIRVAN AND CABISTAN

Shirvan and Cabistan rugs are classed together because of their similarity in texture; they are the aristocrats of the Daghestan group. Cabistans are somewhat larger than Shirvans, but neither variety is found in large carpets; they usually range through the medium sizes.

### NAZAMI OR SHIRVAN PRAYER

Nazami or Shirvan Prayer rugs are familiar to every Oriental rug buyer. No Mohammedan family and no Mohammedan traveler—unless he be of the wealthiest class, and so may possess a sumptuous Ghiordes—is without at least one Nazami rug, and none other than a Mohammedan weaver is permitted to produce them. When from the

high balconies on the minarets the Muemmins chant their call to prayer, every faithful believer,—after carefully bathing,—points the Mihrab of his Nazarani rug toward Mecca, and, prostrating himself, rests forehead and hands on certain points of the rug so indicated in the design. Nothing is allowed to disturb these brief intervals of worship.

### CARABAGH

Carabagh rugs are woven in the famous "Black Wine" district of Daghestan. They seldom exceed eight feet by four and a half feet in size; their coloring is mainly of red, green and blue; their antiques have a quaint fringe finish. Carabagh motifs are generally geometric or Mihrab-like. A very interesting device shows two hands placed in an attitude of devotion. It is extremely difficult to find an antique Carabagh.

### CASHMERE OR SOUMAC

Cashmere or Soumac rugs are entirely needle-wrought, and come from the mountain district of Daghestan between

the Caucasas and the Caspian. They have no nap; little tufts of the needle worker's wool appear on the reverse side of the rug just as they do on the reverse of a Cashmere shawl; there is usually a long fringe at each end. The design is very characteristic: three square or oblong figures mark the center, with at either side diamond-shaped medallions. There are three borders, one wide and two quite narrow, the outer-most being always in zigzag or wave device. Usual Cashmere colors are white, blue, dark red and orange. Time has mellowed the Cashmere antiques to exquisite softness. Cashmeres are seldom woven larger than eleven feet by eight feet.

Some other well-known individuals of the Daghestan group are:

Chichi (or Teheran), Kazakja, Derebend and Baku.

#### GROUP IV.

##### TURKESTAN OR TURCOMAN

Turkestan or Turcoman weavings are marked by such peculiar beauty that

one involuntarily searches its inspiration from the place where they were created. The enchantment of true Bokharas—whether of the royal or princess family, or otherwise,—is acknowledged by every connoisseur; the exquisite richness of the rose or wine groundwork,—the deft introduction of the characteristic octagonal lozenge motif—uniformly and delicately outlined in green, gold, ivory and dark blue—the velvety touch and visioning, all combine to render a rich Bokhara a royal possession indeed, ever-increasing in power of beauty. A study of the place whence they come, is then, one of general interest; the province of Bokhara is a Russian province full of alluringly beautiful gardens, and is surrounded by a battlemented wall four times or more the height of man; it is situated on a fertile plain in the neighborhood of Zaraf-Shan; students gather there from every part of Asia thronging its famous mosques and colleges; in its wealth of bazaars are displayed the richest products of the East. An antique Bokhara



ANTIQUE SAMARKAND RUG



it is now almost impossible to find. In size they are seldom larger than ten feet by seven feet. The rare and beautiful Bokhara-Mihrab is rich maroon in ensemble, with quickening touches of ivory and dark, soft blue; it is sumptuous in pile. Mihrab Bokharas never exceed five feet by four feet in size.

## SAMARKAND

Samarkand weaves come to us from their name city which lies in the luxuriant Zaraf-Shan valley near the Tian-Shan mountains in western Turkestan. In this city is the tomb of Timar and his wives, and there are two superb seventeenth century mosques still in almost perfect condition. The opulent arabesques, marble mosaics, colored tiles, and golden inscriptions enriching these buildings, give but a faint idea of how splendid Samarkand was under the rule of Timar. Samarkand Rugs (sometimes erroneously called Malgara) are loose in weave, exquisitely soft in texture, and silky in effect. Their charac-

teristic motif—placed at the center of the piece—is circular or moon-shaped, either alone or in regular succession, on a rich, contrasting groundwork. The dominant colors are violet, soft yellow, rose, green, orange and red. Their size limit is ten feet by six feet. There are almost no antique Samarkands for market purposes.

## GROUP V.

### AFGHAN OR AFGHANISTAN

Of these, Khiva (or Urgeuij) weavings come from another Turkestan province under Russian rule; it is largely populated, mostly by nomads; of the most primitive construction; the dwellings are even the residence of the Khan of Khiva, is a mud hut. As the chief commercial products are sheep, goats, and camels, it is easy to understand why rug-weaving is a natural and much-favored occupation here. The prevailing design of Khiva weavings, is a large octagon; the borders are pleasing but

narrow; the backgrounds are mainly in warm dark red with occasional touches of blue, gold and ivory. The pile is heavy and pronounced; there is a wide selvage at each end. The usual scale size of Khiva weavings, is from nine feet by six, to twelve and two-thirds feet by eight and a half.

### YAMOUD OR YAMOUD-BOKHARA

Yamoud of Yamoud-Bokhara rugs are finer than Khivas—sometimes called Khiva-Bokharas, both which weavings they resemble in size and color; their chief mark of distinction lies in the difference of design.

Beshir and Afghan are two other well-known numbers of this group.

### GROUP VI.

#### BELOOCH OR BELOOCHISTAN

These noble weavings are produced in a country of southern Asia bounded by Afghanistan, Sind, the Arabian Sea and the Persian province of Kerman; it

is peopled by two distinct races, the Brahamis and the Beluchis; the first of these races is home-loving and hospitable; the second is greedy, voracious and wild. The country is under British protectorate and its capital—Kelat—is about its only town or large settlement. These rugs are characterized by a beautiful, silky sheen; they embrace the erroneously called “blue Bokharas”—whose beauty renders them collector’s gems. Characteristic Beloochistan colors are pink, ivory, soft blue, deep maroon and brown. Their body materials are wool, goats’ hair and camels’ hair. They also have characteristic selvages. They are almost never found in size exceeding seven feet by five, and from this they decrease to small mats of the most charming color.

## ORIENTAL TERMS EMPLOYED.

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Muezzin—religious attendant whose duty it is to call to prayer.

Hasser—coarse matting.

Ketchi—heavy felt floor covering.

Messafir odase—reception room.

Okkahaz—jugglers.

Shahir—a Persian coin worth about a penny.

Pabooch—sandal.

Bayit—a Persian couplet.

Irak-Adjemi—Far Persia.

Haybalik—saddle-bag.

Yataghan—double-edged sword.

Kis (Kiz) Kilim—bridal rug.

Irade—a permit.

Nishanzi-bashir—chief scribe.

Tughra (or toghra)—Turkish Coat-of-Arms.

Namazi—Shirvan Prayer rug.

Mihrab—temple arch.

Urgenji—Khiva's other name.

Narghili—Turkish water-pipe for smoking.







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copy 2

Gurdji, V

Threads from the  
oriental loom



T3-CBR-138

